

Legislative Research  
SAFLL

January 1962

Congressional Information

Name: Stennis, John Cornelius - Democrat - Senator from Mississippi

Home: DeKalb, Mississippi

Born: in Kemper County, Miss. - August 3, 1901

Marital Status: married the former Coy Hines of New Albany, Mississippi. Two children - John Hampton and Margaret Jane

Education: Mississippi State College, 1923 (B.S.). - University of Virginia Law School, 1928 (LL.B.)

Profession: Lawyer

Committees: Aeronautical and Space Sciences

Appropriations (Subcommittees: Agriculture, Department of Defense, Labor, Public Works, Atomic Energy Commission, Department of State, Military Construction - Chairman, Deficiencies & Supplementals)

Armed Services (Subcommittees: Preparedness Investigating - Chairman, CIA, Officer Grade Limitation - Chairman, Subcommittee to Study and Appraise Use of Military Personnel and Facilities to Arouse the Public to the Menace of the Cold War and to Inform and Educate the Armed Services Personnel on the Nature and Menace of the Cold War - Chairman)

Bases: Board of Visitors - Naval Academy  
Columbus AFB, Greenville AFB, Keesler AFB

Background: Elected to Mississippi House of Representatives (1928-32)  
District Prosecuting Attorney (16th Judicial District, 1931 and 1935)  
Appointed circuit judge (16th Judicial District, 1937. Reelected 1938, 1942, and 1946)  
Elected to US Senate (November 1947). Reelected in 1952 and 1958.  
Term ending Jan 1, 1965.

86th Congress: Legislative Comments

Bills Introduced -- S. 1916, establish a Central Security Office for administration of Federal personnel loyalty and security programs, hearings, etc.  
S. 3006, military construction authorization bill.  
S.J.Res. 41, establish International Medical Research Council.  
S. Res. 261, common defense study

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Remarks: possesses vast knowledge on defense and personnel matters. In 1958 he Chaired the special subcommittee on military pay raise legislation. Advocated proficiency pay for officers. In 1958 and 1960 he expressed concern over mounting cost of retired pay. Stated that consideration should be given on personnel making a contribution toward their retired pay and to penalize early retirement. (Congressional Record April 29, 1958 Page 7526)

In March of 1960 he commented adversely on colonels and generals retiring in their early or mid forties to take positions with industry. Said this results in substantial increased costs of military retirement. Called for caution in this field -- to prevent retirement from becoming an end in itself rather than a means of providing adequate compensation after conclusion of a career of useful service. (Congressional Record March 20, 1959)

On manned space vehicles - thinks our security would suffer immensely should any adversary outstrip us in development. Called for avoidance of waste and unnecessary duplication in new missile programs such as has arisen in military programs. (Congressional Record March 10, 1959)

Air Defense - in 1960 the Military Construction Subcommittee called for briefing by General Partridge. Subcommittee concluded that NIKE-AJAX-NIKE-HERCULES is virtually obsolete; that no further expenditures be allowed to expand the system except in overseas areas where it might have a tactical value. (Senate Report 296 - 86th Congress)

Defense Problem - Senate Report 434 - again expressed concern about the "multiheaded approach to the defense problem," provided for reduction of planned deployment of both NIKE HERCULES and BOMARC (NIKE for cities and SAC bases, BOMARC for perimeter defense); increased R & D, T & E funds for NIKE ZEUS. The Committee called for development of NIKE ZEUS and all other antimissile missile possibilities. Said: "The Committee still feels the best defense is a strong, effective offense." (Page 5) The bill as passed by the Senate (June 30, 1959) contained in Section 418 request for report on feasibility of expediting BOMARC program, review of all previously programmed missile sites, latest information on antimissile missile, and opinions of JCS on defense of Hawaii and nature of any military threat in next five years. (Congressional Record June 30, 1959 Page 11109)

Manned Bombers - convinced that for long time these will be a substantial part of our front-line defenses. Feels it would be grave error if we fail to provide for the ultimate in manned bombers, i.e. B-70. (Congressional Record February 19, 1960 Page 2779)

B-70 - slow down not only lessens development of a front-line bomber for both AF and Navy but also on commercial front. (Congressional Record March 2, 1960 Page 3876)

Air Freight - on abuse in use of shipment overseas of household effects and on cost-plus-fee contracts by military departments said that eliminations of the two sections (515 and 516) does not in any way condone such practices. "The conferees wish to take this opportunity place the Department of Defense on notice that corrective action should be taken immediately in these areas." (Congressional Record June 1, 1960 Page 10746)

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Airlift - said field neglected. Called for quick and effective striking force which can be put in motion on very shortest notice and taken to point of trouble within shortest reasonable time. (Congressional Record June 2, 1960)

Minuteman - remarked on DOD not yet making a firm decision as to whether this missile be kept in condition by AF or manufacturer. Said there is grave question as to whether it cannot be done as well and cheaper by the manufacturer. (Congressional Record June 27, 1960 Page 13467)

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87th Congress: Legislative Comments

B-70 - March 29, 1961 Los Angeles Times reported he protested cutback. Paper stated: "While endorsing other aspects of the President's defense program, Stennis said he felt the B-70 'should be pushed to the utmost'"

FY 62 Military Construction Authorization Hearings - Excerpts:

Housing - expressed concern over handling of a housing contract at Camp Lejeune. Believes his Preparedness Subcommittee has the machinery to go into it rather rapidly.

Flying Hours - Senator Cannon of Nevada thought much money to Government can be saved if the Secretary had authorization to prohibit flying at Maxwell AFB by students. Said this should be done even if they had to be given a short refresher course upon completion of schooling. Sen. Stennis said: "It certainly seems to me like a very practical suggestion, and I wish you would follow up on that." (Page 481)

AF Academy - on deficiency authorization for the Academy told General Minton he sat here when this Academy was first authorize, and \$100 million was the top figure beyond all question, as I recall it. This certainly has been a sore spot. . . . we have received a lot of critical letters about. I thought last year, when we got over that hump, that we were through. (Page 643)

Aircraft Authorization - during floor debate asked - "The fact that the B-70 program is not included in the authorization bill would in no way preclude the Congress from making an additional appropriation should it see fit to do so; is that correct?" Continuing - "I wished to cover it from my viewpoint and to say that in the opinion of the Senator from Mississippi the B-70 is a companion, in effect and as a practical matter, to the manned bomber program which is covered by the bill." Said he will at the proper time support a request for additional funds to step up and push forward at a more rapid pace the B-70 program. . . . I think we will need such craft for many years to come, and I do not believe it will be rapidly replaced by any kind of missile. (Congressional Record May 15, 1961 Page 7411)

Housing - debate on Capehart housing - changing military situation he said, fully convinces him a better system must be devised if there is to be privately financed housing. Said record shows even though there are fewer men in Services

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than in 1955-- since then Government has constructed more than \$1.6 billion for military housing. Still, the requirements have almost doubled, being 446,000 units. (Congressional Record May 10, 1961 Page 7100)

Military Procurement Authorization (FY62 Hearings) - April 1961

Commended Sec McNamara's statement as the best overall statement of our military posture and situation as to the budget he has ever heard since he has been a member of the Armed Services Committee. Urged a continuation of this pattern. (Page 43)

Tri-Service Plane - commended the Defense Secretary on this proposal. Hopes it works out. (Page 45)

Retirement - said our efforts to keep men in the service has made it more (retirement benefits) attractive for them to leave the service. (Page 46)

C-135's - asked General White about the financing problem. He also evidence some interest in the B-58 and if it had ability to carry Hound Dog or Skybolt.

General LeMay Nomination Hearings -

Sen. Stennis pointed out - "this is an open meeting and I am going to be careful what I ask about. However, I want to mention something to the general that I have been concerned about, after looking into it -- our ICBM's and their operational date, but more immediately the question of scaling down our manned bomber strength, failing to go forward with the B-70, and the failure to put more B-52's into the procurement program."

Texas Tower Catastrophe - subcommittee concluded catastrophe must be shared among designers, Navy, and AF. Called those who died on the Tower patriots in very sense of the word. As to court-martials: The subcommittee will observe, with interest, the court-martial proceedings, if any are held, and, if so, the subcommittee will probably make a supplemental report following such proceedings. (Congressional Record June 28, 1961 Page 10744)

Science Manpower - need for proper utilization - referred to Dr. Lindveit's book - Scientists In Government - which discusses Government problems in this field. (Congressional Record June 29, 1961 Page A4969)

B-70 - said result of holding down development to prototype minus needed sophisticated electronics equipment; flyaway model will come too late with too little. Has not changed opinion of March 28 disagreeing with President's slowdown. Considers it: (a) a first-line weapon of the future; (b) believes development of manned bombers should be pushed to utmost; (c) shares concern of critical manned bomber gap in immediate years ahead. (Congressional Record July 28, 1961)

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DOD FY62 Budget Hearings - Excerpts -

To Sec of Defense urged a more intensified program on getting more fighting power from present personnel.

Soviet Air Show - we must weigh with caution Soviet claims. Said: "One thing it seems to me that this conclusively proves, the showing they make there, is that we must keep a strong emphasis on manned airpower, that it will be a long while before they will be replaced, and I think a long while before they can be reduced, and further that we ought to continue - put emphasis on the front-line development. For instance, the B-70. Asked Mr. Gilpatric if DOD had reappraised your situation as to the B-70 in view of this new evidence? Said: Of course, you realize this matter is again at the forefront and will be valued and revalued by the Congress. So you do not have any objections, of course, to questions coming from us to members of the military that are especially in charge of this program? Mr. Gilpatric replied - No . . . that is your privilege of course.

Preparedness Hearings - Said Preparedness Subcommittee now holding executive hearings on subject of our missile and missile-delivery systems. "We have been told many revealing facts concerning our ability to put our ICBM's on target; and the net result, thus far, has been encouraging and reassuring as to the progress of our missile development. But should we stop here? I think not. We must look down the road to the years ahead, when the use of manned weapons might mean the difference between survival and defeat.

We should know from past experience that unless we spend the money for advanced weapons in time, the money goes down the drain. We should know that endlessly long leadtimes have cost the Government simply enormous sums of money and have brought the Government largely obsolescent weapons.

Are we ignoring these lessons today, as history repeats itself and as we are presented with differing ideas as to how fast we should progress with the B-70, an intercontinental bomber which will fly at three times the speed of sound. . . ." (Page 12392)

Referred too, to House action to allow \$220 million for the B-70 and adding \$238 million on top of that for long-range bombers, including the B-52 and the B-58, but with some preference for the B-70. He said the Senate should set at rest the matter of the B-70 for FY 62 by expressly adding \$138 million to the \$220 million allowed for this express purpose of the B-70.

Thinks we should act no - "but I want to assure Senators that my recommendation for a stepup of the B-70 program is not based on the Berlin crisis. It is based on a continuing need for the development of the foremost manned weapons that our skills and resources can provide. I consider the B-70 a must for a balanced program in the years ahead. . . . We should keep our bomber production lines open."

Mentioned again the Soviet air show . . . In view of the changing world situation, I am sure, he said, the President will use the added funds we provide. I consider the manned bomber a first line defense weapon of the future. (Congressional Record July 11, 1961 Pages 12392-93)

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Space - For some time has been concerned with Soviet ability to launch a space vehicle from an already orbiting satellite.

Praised our Agena shot. Finds it difficult to separate civilian and military aspects of space exploration.

Said: We must strengthen our military space program; develop the basic capabilities required for future offensive and defensive space operations.

Called for development of large boosters so we can place large payloads in orbit, transport, support, and utilize man in space, and so we can rendezvous and construct manned and unmanned space stations.

Said: "I have said many times that we should not separate the military and civilian applications of space quite as arbitrarily as we have in the past. I think we have hampered the military from adequately and properly proceeding along in the space field as expeditiously as possible. The development of space capabilities is one of the greatest challenges facing this Nation." Hopes our policy will never reach the point where the military is restricted or curtailed in connection with any of these ventures into space. Said military must be given full opportunity to follow through with these necessary developments.

(Congressional Record August 24, 1961 Page 15868)

FY 62 DOD Budget Debate -

Hopes added sums for B-70 will be voted. Referred to recent hearings on the missile program where he heard testimony from "The great Air Force general -- and I use the word 'great' advisedly -- General LeMay - who is responsible for both the missile program and basic AF program; from Gen. Power; Adm. Raborn; Adm. Hayward -- nevertheless, as is well known, there are difficulties to be overcome and hazards to run in so-called failures in firings, so much so that now and for several years to come, the manned bomber unmistakably will be our chief weapon of that type -- of this I have no doubt." (Congressional Record August 3, 1961 Page 13480-81)

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